

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

April 29, 2009; 4:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

PRESENT

ABSENT

Akua B. Agyei
Trena Carter
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Tony McClendon
Rosalind Pegram
Gil Palmer
John Roberts
Shiva Rallapalli
John Stroh

Pam Vincent

Meeting called to order

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Roberts called roll.

Commissioner Carter moved that the March Minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Kohen seconded. March Minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Staff secretary reported that as of April 27, 2009 the donations account balance as \$9,488.28. Further details to be provided with the Annual dinner wrap up report.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chairperson Palmer informed Commissioners of incidents occurring within the community involving BCSC students. He advised that the first incident involved a verbal altercation at the home of the African-American male student as a result of his interaction with a Caucasian female student away from the high school campus. The ensuing verbal altercation at the young man's home involved an ex-boyfriend of the female, along with some of his associates, the young man and his parents. The Chairperson did note that overall the parents were pleased with responses and actions of local law enforcement and school administrators.

The second incident reported by Chairperson Palmer, occurred at Richard's Elementary school, involving a young black male and white female. The incident, witnessed by the young man's father, involved the young male student being overly chastised by a Caucasian teacher while the young Caucasian female was not reprimanded in any form. He advised that administrators did counsel the teacher with additional training being requested.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Deputy Director Smith submitted the Director's report to Commissioners advising that multiple complaint intakes had occurred and that she was preparing for two intakes scheduled within the next week. The Deputy Director went on to advise Commissioners of Director Tinsley's commitments to conduct trainings in both Ivy Tech and IUPUC classes in addition to a 'lunch and learn' training at Cummins regarding the new ADA Amendments Act.

The Deputy Director provided an update on the progress of the C.A.M.E.O. committee. She reported that Director Tinsley, Lyn Morgan, program manager for the Heritage Fund, and herself, had worked on the By-Laws that were adopted by the group. She continued by advising that the C.A.M.E.O. group had held elections to select the members of their executive board and the results were as follows: President, Kenan Al-Husseini; Vice President, Tom Harmon, Secretary, Rocio Rodriguez; Treasurer, Sabby Sabapathy and Webmaster Augustine Jung. Additional support was provided by Director Tinsley such as a tool kit that included information on running their meetings and other resources to support the group as they continue independently. The Deputy Director commended the group on their energy as they have sub-committees active and working. The cultural diversity of the executive committee and their sensitivity to cultural differences and professionalism was demonstrated by their ability to disagree with each other with respect and come to resolutions and make decisions. Discussion ensued.

OPEN FORUM:

Commissioner Roberts shared that he had been invited to attend the 2009 National Council of Student Development (NCSD) Forum in Washington D.C. in June. Representing Ivy Tech, the state's largest community college system, Commissioner Roberts, as one of two representatives from Indiana, will be part of a forum that will be formulating rules and regulations by which community colleges across the country will be dealing specifically with GLBT issues within the community college community.

Commissioner Roberts also announced that Ivy Tech, with a goal to upgrade the diversity of their faculty, would begin recruiting for permanent teaching positions effective May 4th. He went on to advise that a Master's Degree would be required for these positions and that candidate close to completion of a master's degree would also be considered. He advised that the teaching positions would be specific to the School of Arts and Sciences and asked meeting attendees to share the information with any interested candidates.

Commissioner Pegram reported that she had been touring Indiana counties announcing the start-up of her business services for residents in Bartholomew and surrounding counties. She advised that the primary focus of her business will be to provide service support to immigrant individuals with their tax documentation, travel forms and other immigration documentation. She announced that the opening date would be May 1st and distributed a flyer with additional information.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Report on Human Rights Six Sigma Project and Recommendations from Sameer Samudra, Six Sigma Black Belt

Deputy Director Smith introduced guest speaker, Sameer Samudra, Six Sigma Black Belt with Cummins Inc.

Sameer provided Commissioners with background relative to what he hoped to accomplish with the Six Sigma project. Sameer stated that after approaching Director Tinsley with this project and obtaining additional input the Commission, he was able to create the team of both the Director and Deputy Director, Tracy Souza and himself as facilitator.

With the economic concerns, Director Tinsley had outlined that she needed to know: what's working and what is not working, where the commission focus its energy and which initiatives could have more energy invested into it, as well as whether changes should be made to the annual dinner.

Sameer briefly described the Six Sigma process and approach: **DMAIC**, Define the problem; Measure critical elements around the problem; Analyze the data; Improvements and Control plans are put in place.

Sameer identified two groups that served as resources to gather input about the Commission, the customer and the stakeholder. 35 individuals from these groups were interviewed with specific questions about the Columbus Human Rights Commission and what changes or improvements would they like to see.

Sameer explained how the data was analyzed and provided an outline of the Implementation and Control Plans and provided a copy of the improvement plan and recommendations. Discussion ensued.

LIAISON UPDATES – GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE:

Commissioner Kohen reported that he had attended the last meeting of the G/SA and those members, overall, were pleased with the annual dinner. Members inquired about a recent complaint that was resolved through the Commission's voluntary mediation process and wanted to know what information would be available to them. Deputy Director Smith advised that requests for information must be submitted to the office during business hours. Commissioner Kohen also advised that the Alliance has many activities already planned for the summer and he will provide more information as it comes available.

LIAISON UPDATES – MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:

Commissioner Agyei advised that as she was unable to attend the meeting and will obtain an update from Becker Wahbeh.

LIAISON UPDATES – INTERFAITH FORUM COMMISSION:

Commissioner Lewis advised that the Commission is now meeting on the lower level of City Hall. He reported that Chairperson, Lila Pagni recently visited East High School in an effort to encourage student participation in the Reconciliation Day, scheduled for October 4, 2009. He advised that ten of his students did sign up as being interested in the observance

LIAISON UPDATES – INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COALITION:

Did not meet.

LIAISON UPDATES – IMMIGRATION ISSUES FORUM:

Commissioner Pegram reported that Detective Steve Norman attended the last Forum meeting and provided an update concerning local gang activity and that thanks to community members making active reports, Columbus does not suffer from an open market to gang activities. Commissioner Pegram announced that the Dream Act is being re-introduced into legislation by Senator Lugar and the immigrant community is very excited.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Lewis moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Agyei seconded. Meeting adjourned.